

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

09/986,908

Examiner

Jonathan G. Sterrett

Applicant(s)

IKEZAWA ET AL.

Art Unit

3623

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to 10-11-06.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1,2,4,6-8,10,12-16,18,20-22,24 and 26-30.
3. ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6. ☒ Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date 20061216.
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____.

Examiner's Amendment

1. An examiner's amendment to the record is attached to the Office Action. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Mr. James Love, Reg. 58,421 on 15 December 2006. See attached interview summary.

2. The claims below are the pending claims in the application.

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A commodity-supply planning method comprising:
storing transaction information representing contents of each of a plurality of transactions in a storage, in association with each of the plurality of transactions each for providing commodities to customers, and storing progress information representing whether each of the plurality of transactions is in a state of attaining each of a plurality of stages each indicating a progress level of the transaction based on progress of sales activities performed for accomplishing the transaction, in association with the transaction information, in said storage;

summing a number of transactions dealing with a same commodity and having reached a same stage, twice at different points in time; and

calculating an increase or decrease rate of the number of transactions, which have reached their respective stages, from results of the twice summing performed

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~~twice continuously, and estimating a future demand for the commodity based on the increase or decrease rate;~~

calculating an accomplishment probability by each stage of the plurality of the stages, the accomplishment probability being a probability that each of the transactions in a state of attaining the stage as the highest attained stage will be successfully accomplished after a predetermined period of time, based on statistical data representing a period of time required for successfully accomplishing each of the transactions in a state of attaining the stage as the highest attained stage;

multiplying, by each stage, a sum of the expected sales of the commodities by the accomplishment probability;

setting a sum of the products calculated in the multiplying step for the plurality of the stages;

estimating a future demand for the commodities based on the previous steps;

and

storing the estimated future demand on a computer readable storage medium.

Claim 2 (Original): The commodity-supply planning method according to claim 1, wherein

the stored transaction information includes information representing expected sales of the commodities in each of the plurality of transactions.

Claim 3 (Cancelled).

Claim 4 (Previously Presented): The commodity-supply planning method according to claim 1, further including:

calculating a change rate in the expected sales of the commodities based on the expected sales of the commodities, at each of the plurality of the stages, and estimating the future demand for the commodities, based on the actual demand and the calculated change rates at the plurality of the stages.

Claim 5 (Cancelled).

Claim 6 (Previously Presented): The commodity-supply planning method according to claim 1, further including:

making a plan for supplying the commodities, based on the expected demand and stock of the commodities.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): A commodity-supply planning method comprising:
reading transaction information stored in a first storage and progress information stored in the storage associated with the transaction information;

summing a number of transactions dealing with a same commodity and having reached a same stage, the stage corresponding to the progress information, twice at different points in time, and storing the number of transactions summed in a second storage;

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reading results of the summing performed twice continuously, from the second storage; and

calculating an increase or decrease rate of the number of transactions, which have reached their respective stages, from reading the results of the summing, and ~~estimating a future demand for the commodity based on the increase or decrease rate,~~

wherein the transaction information represents contents of each of a plurality of transactions for supplying customers with the commodities, and wherein

the progress information represents whether each of the plurality of transactions is in a state of attaining each of a plurality of stages each indicating a progress level of the transaction, based on progress of sales activities performed for accomplishing the transaction;

calculating an accomplishment probability by each stage of the plurality of the stages, wherein the accomplishment probability is a probability that each of the transactions in a state of attaining the stage as the highest attained stage will be successfully accomplished after a predetermined period of time, based on statistical data representing a period of time required for successfully accomplishing each of the transactions in a state of the stage as the highest attained stage;

multiplying a sum of the expected sales of the commodities by the accomplishment probability, by each stage;

setting a sum of the products of multiplying by the accomplishment probability for the plurality of the stages;

estimating a future demand for the commodities based on the previous steps;
and
storing the estimated future demand on a computer readable storage medium.

Claim 8 (Original): The commodity-supply planning method according to claim 7,
wherein

the transaction information includes information representing expected sales of
the commodities in the transaction specified in the transaction information.

Claim 9 (Cancelled).

Claim 10 (Previously Presented): The commodity-supply planning method
according to claim 7, further including:

calculating a change rate in the sums of the expected sales of the commodities,
based on the sums of the expected sales of the commodities at the plurality of points in
time, by each stage, and estimating a future demand for the commodities based on an
actual demand for the commodities and the calculated change rates.

Claim 11 (Cancelled).

Claim 12 (Previously Presented): The commodity-supply planning method
according to claim 7, further including:

classifying, by each stage, the plurality of transactions in a state of attaining the stage as the highest attained stage, based on a scale of the sales of the commodities in each of the transactions; and

calculating the accomplishment probability by each group of transactions.

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): The commodity-supply planning method according to claim 7, further including:

multiplying, by each stage, the product calculated in the multiplying step by a weighting coefficient in accordance with a kind of the commodities; and

setting a sum of the resultant products of multiplying by the weighting coefficient for the plurality of the stages, as an expected demand for the commodities within the predetermined period of time.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented): The commodity-supply planning method according to claim 7, further including:

making a plan for supplying the commodities, based on the estimated demand and stock of the commodities.

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): A commodity-supply planning system comprising:

a first server including

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a first processor which manages information regarding supplying of commodities,

a first storage which stores information regarding the supplying of the commodities, and

a timer which provides said first processor with date/time information; and
a second server including

a second processor which manages information regarding sales activities of the commodities, and

a second storage which stores information regarding the sales activities, wherein said second processor

stores transaction information in said second storage, wherein the transaction information represents contents of each of a plurality of transactions each for providing customers with the commodities, and

stores progress information in said second storage associated with the transaction information, wherein the progress information represents whether each of the plurality of the transactions is in a state of attaining each of a plurality of stages, each stage indicating a progress level of each of the plurality of transactions, based on progress of the sales activities performed for accomplishing each of the transactions, and

wherein said first processor

reads the transaction information and the progress information which are stored in said second storage unit, in association with each other,

sums a number of transactions dealing with a same commodity and having reached a same stage, twice at different points in time, according to the date/time information sent from said timer, and stores the number of transactions summed in said first storage;

reads results of the summing performed twice continuously, from said first storage; and

calculates an increase or decrease rate of the number of transactions, which have reached their respective stages, from the read results of the summing, ~~and estimates a future demand for the commodity based on the increase or decrease rate;~~

calculates an accomplishment probability by each stage of the plurality of the stages, wherein the accomplishment probability is a probability that each of the transactions in a state of attaining the stage as the highest attained stage will be successfully accomplished after a predetermined period of time, based on statistical data representing a period of time required for accomplishing each of the transactions in a state of attaining the stage as the highest attained stage;

multiplies a sum of the expected sales of the commodities by the accomplishment probability, by each stage;

sets a sum of the products of multiplying by the accomplishment probability for the plurality of the stages;

estimates a future demand for the commodities based on the previous steps; and

stores the estimated future demand on a computer readable storage medium.

Claim 16 (Original): The commodity-supply planning system according to claim 15, wherein

the transaction information including expected sales of the commodities in each of the plurality of transactions, in said second storage.

Claim 17 (Cancelled).

Claim 18 (Previously Presented): The commodity-supply planning system according to claim 15, wherein

said first processor calculates a change rate in the sums of the expected sales of the commodities based on the sums of the expected sales of the commodities, by each stage, and estimates a future demand for the commodities, based on the actual demand and the calculated change rates.

Claim 19 (Cancelled).

Claim 20 (Original): The commodity-supply planning system according to claim 15, wherein said first server and said second server are included in the same computer.

Claim 21 (Currently Amended): A commodity-supply planning system comprising:

a processor which manages information regarding supplying of commodities;

a first storage which stores information regarding the supplying of the commodities; and

a timer which provides said processor with date/time information,

wherein said processor

reads out transaction information and progress information which are stored in a second storage in association with each other,

sums a number of transactions dealing with a same commodity and having reached a same stage, twice at different points in time, according to the date/time information sent from said timer, and stores the number of transactions summed in said first storage;

reads results of the summing performed twice continuously, from said first storage; and

calculates an increase or decrease rate of the number of transactions, which have reached their respective stages, from the read results of the summing, ~~and estimates a future demand for the commodity based on the increase or decrease rate,~~

wherein the transaction information represents contents of each of the plurality of transactions for providing customers with the commodities, and

wherein the progress information represents whether each of the transactions has reached each of a plurality of stages indicating a progress degree of the transaction, in accordance with progress of sales activities performed for successfully accomplishing each transaction specified in the transaction information;

calculates an accomplishment probability by each of the plurality of the stages, wherein the accomplishment probability is a probability that each of the transactions in a state of attaining the stage as the highest attained stage will be successfully accomplished after a predetermined period of time, based on statistical data representing a period of time required for successfully accomplishing each of the transactions in a state of attaining the stage as highest attained stage;

multiplies a sum of the expected sales of the commodities by the accomplishment probability, by each stage;

sets a sum of the products of multiplying by the accomplishment probability for the plurality of the stages a value;

estimates a future demand for the commodities based on the previous steps; and stores the estimated future demand on a computer readable storage medium.

Claim 22 (Original): The commodity-supply planning system according to claim 21, wherein

the transaction information includes expected sales of the commodities in each of the transactions specified in the transaction information.

Claim 23 (Cancelled).

Claim 24 (Previously Presented): The commodity-supply planning system according to claim 21, wherein said processor
calculates a change rate in the sums of the expected sales of the commodities, based on the sums of the expected sales of the commodities at the plurality of points in time, by each stage, and estimates a future demand for the commodities based on an actual demand for the commodities and the calculated change rates for the plurality of the stages.

Claim 25 (Cancelled).

Claim 26 (Previously Presented): The commodity-supply planning system according to claim 21, wherein said processor:
classifies, by each stage, the plurality of transactions in a state of attaining the stage as the highest attained stage, based on a scale of the sales of the commodities in each of the transactions; and
calculates the accomplishment probability by each group of transactions.

Claim 27 (Previously Presented): The commodity-supply planning system according to claim 21, wherein said processor:

multiplies, by each stage, the resultant product of multiplying by a weighting coefficient in accordance with a kind of the commodities; and

sets a sum of the resultant products of multiplying by the weighting coefficient for the plurality of the stages, as an expected demand for the commodities within the predetermined period of time.

Claim 28 (Original): The commodity-supply planning system according to claim 21, wherein said processor

makes a plan for supplying the commodities, based on the estimated demand and stock of the commodities.

Claim 29 (Currently Amended): A computer-readable recording medium storing a program for controlling a computer to execute a commodity-supply planning method comprising:

storing transaction information representing contents of each of a plurality of transactions for providing customers with commodities and including sales of the commodities in each of the plurality of transactions, in a storage, and storing progress information representing whether each of the plurality of transactions is in a state of attaining each of a plurality of stages, in the storage in association with the transaction information, each stage indicating a progress level of the transaction based on progress of sales activities performed for accomplishing the transaction;

summing a number of transactions dealing with a same commodity and having reached a same stage, twice at different points in time; and

calculating an increase or decrease rate of the number of transactions, which have reaching their respective stages, from results of the summing performed twice continuously, ~~and estimating a future demand for the commodity based on the increase or decrease rate;~~

calculating an accomplishment probability by each stage of the plurality of the stages, the accomplishment probability being a probability that each of the transactions in a state of attaining the stage as the highest attained stage will be successfully accomplished after a predetermined period of time, based on statistical data representing a period of time required for successfully accomplishing each of the transactions in a state of attaining the stage as the highest attained stage;

multiplying, by each stage, a sum of the expected sales of the commodities by the accomplishment probability;

setting a sum of the products calculated in the multiplying step for the plurality of the stages;

estimating a future demand for the commodities based on the previous steps;

and

storing the estimated future demand on a computer readable storage medium.

Claim 30 (Previously Presented): The recording medium according to claim 29, wherein

the transaction information includes information representing expected sales of the commodities in each of the transactions.

Allowable Subject Matter

3. **Claims 1, 2, 4, 6-8, 10, 12, 13-16, 18, 20-22, 24 and 26-30** are allowed.

Reasons for Allowance

6. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter:

None of the prior art of record, taken individually or in any combination, teach, inter alia,

storing transaction information representing contents of each of a plurality of transactions in a storage, in association with each of the plurality of transactions each for providing commodities to customers, and storing progress information representing whether each of the plurality of transactions is in a state of attaining each of a plurality of stages each indicating a progress level of the transaction based on progress of sales activities performed for accomplishing the transaction, in association with the transaction information,

summing a number of transactions dealing with a commodity and having reached a same stage, twice at different points in time; and

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calculating an increase or decrease rate of the number of transactions, which have reached their respective stages, from results of the twice summing performed;

calculating an accomplishment probability by each stage of the plurality of the stages, the accomplishment probability being a probability that each of the transactions in a state of attaining the stage as the highest attained stage will be successfully accomplished after a predetermined period of time, based on statistical data representing a period of time required for successfully accomplishing each of the transactions in a state of attaining the stage as the highest attained stage;

multiplying, by each stage, a sum of the expected sales of the commodities by the accomplishment probability;

setting a sum of the products calculated in the multiplying step for the plurality of the stages; estimating a future demand for the commodities based on the previous steps; and storing the estimated future demand on a computer readable storage medium.

as recited in independent **Claims 1, 7, 15, 21 and 29.**

The novelty of the invention is in the combination of the limitations cited in independent **Claims 1, 7, 15, 21 and 29** and not in any specific individual claim limitation.

The prior art reference most closely resembling the applicants claimed

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invention is: Business Wire, "**SalesLogix** New SolutionPacks Deliver Advanced Sales Forecasting and Enterprise Power; New Technology Facilitates Rapid Development of Custom SalesLogix Plug-Ins", Nov 3, 1998, New York, p.1, ProQuest ID 35631983, (hereinafter **SalesLogix**).

SalesLogix discloses some of the features of the claimed invention, as discussed below. For those features missing from SalesLogix, an unreasonable number of references would be required, so that a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would not have been motivated to combine SalesLogix with the required references. Therefore a combination of these features was not reasonably found in the prior art.

While **SalesLogix** discloses:

storing transaction information representing contents of each of a plurality of transactions in a storage, in association with each of the plurality of transactions each for providing commodities to customers,

and storing progress information representing whether each of the plurality of transactions is in a state of attaining each of a plurality of stages each indicating a progress level of the transaction based on progress of sales activities performed for accomplishing the transaction, in association with the transaction information, in said storage; and

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determining the highest attained stage for each of the plurality of transactions, based on the progress information in association with each of the plurality of transactions,

and summing expected sales of the commodities in each of the plurality of transactions with the same highest attained stage, at a plurality of points in time; and

estimating a future demand for the commodities, based on the expected sales of the commodities and an actual demand for the commodities.

it lacks,

summing each of the expected sales of the commodities by stages in the pipeline based on the probability that the sale will close.

basing future demand on current demand;

calculating a forecasted demand by using a probability associated with each stage of a sales pipeline and basing on statistical data the probability that the sales will exit the stages and the pipeline in a period of time.

as recited in independent Claims 1, 7, 15, 21 and 29.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

7. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

JP 11215702 A by Takada discloses a method for demand forecasting.

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jonathan G. Sterrett whose telephone number is 571-272-6881. The examiner can normally be reached on 8-6.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tariq Hafiz can be reached on 571-272-6729.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

JGS

12-16-2006

(Signature)
C. Michelle Tarae
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3623